



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20207

Record of Commission Action
Commissioners Voting by Ballot*

Commissioners Voting: Chairman Hal Stratton
 Commissioner Nancy A. Nord
 Commissioner Thomas H. Moore

ITEM:

CPSC Reorganization
(Briefing package dated June 9, 2005, OS No. 5202)

DECISION:

The Commission voted (2-1) to approve the proposed reorganization of several Commission Offices and functions and direct the Office of the General Counsel to prepare a draft *Federal Register* notice accordingly for consideration by the Commission. Chairman Stratton and Commissioner Nord voted to approve the matter and Commissioner Moore abstained. The reorganization is comprised of three distinct parts. A new Office of Information and Administrative Services will be created combining the Office of Information Services, the Office of the Secretary and the Administrative Services Division of the Directorate for Administration. The Offices of Planning and Evaluation and Budget will be combined with the Financial Services and Procurement Services Divisions of the Directorate for Administration to form the Office of Financial Management and Planning. The Directorate for Field Operations will be streamlined and integrated into the Office of Compliance.

Commissioner Moore submitted the attached statement explaining his abstention.

For the Commission:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd A. Stevenson".

Todd A. Stevenson
Secretary

* Ballot vote due June 16, 2005

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS H. MOORE ON THE PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

June 16, 2005

This proposal is difficult to assess because almost none of the people affected, from the most senior managers on down, have had any input into it (or even knew about it until it was presented to them over the last few days). We should have nothing to fear and absolutely everything to gain by having an honest, open discussion with the staff involved before we make decisions affecting their careers. They may have good reasons why certain consolidations would work better than others or why something short of such a drastic restructuring would achieve the same or similar objectives. But they were never given a hearing. That many of them are stunned and hurt should not be a surprise.

Based on the limited information that I have at this point, it appears that some parts of the proposal have real merit. In other areas it is harder to see where we will achieve any significant efficiencies. Nevertheless, I realize, and our employees need to understand, that parts of the current staffing situation are out of the agency's hands. Our budget situation was imposed upon us. To get VERA and VSIP authority we had to present a plan of reorganization—a process that seems to put the cart before the horse. Until you know who takes advantage of either of these authorities, if anyone, you don't have a true picture of how best to reorganize. We are forced to guess about what will happen and hope that we are right. But what if the administrative people simply don't want or can't afford to leave under either of these authorities. What if the higher grades in the Field stay? What if all you've done is merely fold organizations into other organizations. While you may have a more streamlined organization horizontally, in some cases you have a more layered and complicated one vertically.

THE FIELD

Certain of the consolidations in the plan have been proposed before. However, the one involving the Field had never been discussed with my office even as a possibility. I had been led to believe that the only change in the Field structure would be to close the three remaining Field offices. I was

prepared to accept that proposal. However, this is not what came up in the ballot last week.

Our Field staff puts a local face on the agency. They are our front line in public education. Many of them have been doing this long before I ever got here. Now it seems their main function is to do investigations (hence the name of their new organization--The Investigations Division). But the Field staff are far more than just investigators. They do yeomen's work for the Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction and they should be allowed to do the wonderful job they have been doing for years—speaking, educating, comforting and listening to the public.

It is true that we are in an information age, but the people that we most need to reach are not reading The Wall Street Journal or The Washington Post or watching CNN, and they are not searching our website. They are in small towns reading their weekly papers and listening to the local radio shows and attending local meetings—places where the Field used to have an impact. As we shrink our public presence, we begin to lose these points of contact with the people we should be helping. The evaluation of the Field done by the Office of Planning and Evaluation looked at where investigators should be located. But big cities and ports and manufacturing centers are not necessarily where public outreach is needed or where HIR activities will need to be conducted.

ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND EVALUATION, AND BUDGET

If we have to eliminate the Directorate for Administration, this is certainly a better plan than the one that was presented last year, where no real justification for combining Finance and Procurement with the Office of Information Services was presented. I do worry that the current head of Administration, having had two-thirds of his responsibilities transferred out from under him will have a more difficult time justifying his grade.

The Offices of Budget and of Planning and Evaluation work very closely together now. Assuming the hierarchy can be figured out, combining these organizations could be a very good fit.

On a more general level, I am worried about the emphasis placed on eliminating lower level administrative positions, which are occupied largely by minority women. However well-intentioned the emphasis is, it may not be perceived that way.

Our employees are troopers, and they will do the best with what they are handed. I just wish they had been involved in the process. Because their input is not in this plan, I do not feel comfortable in imposing my will upon them and I am therefore abstaining from voting on this issue until a plan is proposed that includes the proper participation and input from all relevant areas of the Commission that should have been at the table when restructuring plans were being discussed. Under such a procedure, we could very well end up with a final plan that looks much like (if not identical to) the plan that has been proposed. Or we could end up with something quite different. I just want all objections and suggestions to be considered and addressed. As it is, I do not feel confident that the process has necessarily produced the best result.

I note, as an aside, that once adopted, this proposal will leave us with an organizational structure of Offices and Divisions. I continue to believe that approval of proposed Divisional reorganizations is within the purview of all of the Commissioners.